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A.J. White Hutton

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**JOSEPH PARKER McKEEHAN**

On a fine afternoon in the Fall of the year 1902—to be exact, Wednesday, October First—at 4 P.M. the opening exercises of the Law School were held “in the large lecture room in the Law Building,” so records *The Forum* in Vol. 7, at page 1. Dr. George Edward Reed, President of the Law School and also President of Dickinson College, presided and made the principal address. It was on this occasion that Dr. Reed presented, *inter alia*, two new members of the faculty, Joseph Parker McKeehan and this writer. The members of the faculty were: Dr. Trickett, Judge Sadler, Senator Weakley, Prof. Sadler, Major Pilcher, Professors Hutton, Swartz and McKeehan.

Thus began the career of Professor McKeehan in his service to Dickinson School of Law which was continuous and terminated with his death in June of 1950.

The following from *The Forum* and probably written by Dr. Trickett is so appropriate, closing as it does with a prediction, as to merit its quotation in full:

“Professor McKeehan is so well known to the alumni and the students of the Law School that he requires no introduction. Graduating from Dickinson College in 1897, he was immediately appointed by Dr. Reed as an instructor in the Preparatory School. His work there was so satisfactory that he was soon promoted to the vice-principalship of that department. Three years as an instructor convinced him that he would not be contented in that profession, so he resigned to take up the study of law. Entering the Law School in 1900, he was graduated in 1902, completing in two years the three year course. As a student, he was conscientious and thorough. In the college he won the prize offered for the best entrance examination in his Freshman year, and in his Sophomore and Junior years he was honorably mentioned for general excellency in his work. In the Law School, in his first year, he won the Dean’s prize for the best examination in Evidence, and although he carried extra work his work in the class room, at all times, was of a character that represented careful and persistent study. He possesses a well disciplined and analytical mind, a forceful power of expression, and a thoroughness in the presentation of his subject. From the comments of his classes, we predict for him a record as an instructor as brilliant as his record as a student.”

This appraisal of ability and prediction as to career have been amply displayed and justified in the forty-eight years expended as teacher and administrator. When Professor McKeehan began his work, the Law School was housed in the old Methodist Church Building located at the northeast corner of Pomfret and West Streets in Carlisle. This was razed when in 1917 the School moved to its present location. The old site is now occupied by the United Brethren Church afterwards erected.

Looking back over the years one is reminded of the nostalgic lament of the late Chief Justice J. Hay Brown in his valedictory upon the close of his twenty-one year term of office as Justice:

"It seems but as yesterday that I came upon this Bench."

So it may be said by this writer of the extended career of Professor McKeehan, that it seems but as yesterday we were occupying "the large lecture room" on the October afternoon almost a half century ago. Many changes in law and procedure have occurred over these years requiring prodigious labor and study to keep abreast of the times. Never was Professor McKeehan a laggard nor did he ever become weary in the search of legal principles but always enthusiastic and alert; these were the qualities that made him a great teacher and an able lawyer. Above all he was a gentleman as well as a scholar. Many personal incidents are recalled which endeared him to the faculty and to the student body but such are hardly in place here. Suffice it to say that through the length of a life exceeding the scriptural allotment, he gave to the school and to hundreds of students filling his class room over the years an unstinted devotion to duty and a dedication of his great talents as a profound student of the law, the influences of which are beyond human calculation. To some of us the removal of this great soul, familiar and so friendly over the many years, is a personal loss irreparable.

In the field of contract law and of sales to which he was especially devoted, Professor McKeehan was a recognized and outstanding authority. His contributions to the Law Review on a wide variety of topics reflected his breadth of scope in the vast domain of the law. A series of presentations on moral consideration as a legal concept in Pennsylvania and the discussions concerning our local statute of frauds were well received, reflecting a profound legal mind. The editorial and business staffs of Dickinson Law Review have lost a valued friend and earnest co-laborer.

This life here so inadequately and sketchily surveyed was one well spent, devoted as it was, to family, to school, to community, to commonwealth and to nation, and who can measure the influence of such a life so recorded?

Of Joseph Parker McKeehan, it may be aptly said as has been of others:

"So they gave their bodies to the commonwealth and received, each for his own memory, praise that will never die; and with it the grandest of all sepulchres, not that in which their mortal bones are laid, but a home in the minds of men, where their glory remains fresh to stir to speech or action as occasion comes.

For the whole earth is the sepulchre of famous men; and their story is not graven only on stone over their native earth, but lives on far away, without visible symbol, woven into the stuff of other men's lives."

*Requiescat in pace.*

December 1, 1950.

A. J. White Hutton

At a formal meeting of the faculty held on December 5, 1950 each member expressed his concurrence in the sentiments so eloquently expressed by Professor Hutton.

Walter H. Hitchler  
F. Eugene Reader  
Edward N. Polisher  
I. Herbert Rothenberg  
D. Fenton Adams  
Frank M. Davis  
William H. Dodd  
Richard H. Wagner  
Hermas L. Weary  
William G. Williams